

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7142

S E C R E T BANGKOK 15503

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: ALLEGED AMERICANS WITH LO HSING-HAN AT HIS CAPTURE

1. EMBASSY OFFICERS, WHILE BRIEFING LT. GEN. KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN, SUPREME COMMAND DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, ON ANOTHER ISSUE OCTOBER 1 (BANGKOK 15333), HEARD ONCE AGAIN THE FALSE RUMOR THAT TWO AMERICANS WERE SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR LO HSING-HAN'S CAPTURE. KRIANGSAK SAID THAT TIN OO (NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE WAS REFERRING TO POLICE COL. OR BRIG. GEN.) HAD TOLD HIM THAT "TWO AMERICANS" HAD BEEN SEEN IN THE SHAN STATES WITH LO DURING THE ENTIRE WEEK BEFORE HIS CAPTURE, AND THAT THE SAME TWO HAD BEEN AT DON MUANG AIRPORT TO PHOTOGRAPH THE TAKE OFF OF THE PLANE BEARING LO HSING-HAN TO RANGOON IMPRISONMENT AFTER THE GOT HAD TURNED HIM OVER TO THE GUB.

2. WE ASSURED KRIANGSAK THAT THE TWO INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT AMERICANS BUT MOST LIKELY BRITISH TV CORRESPONDENTS ADRIAN COWELL AND CHRIS MENGES. (COWELL HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY ACTIVE IN ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE CONGRESSMAN WOLFF TO SUPPORT THE SHAN STATES ARMY IN A SCHEME INVOLVING THE CESSATION OF OPIUM GROWING FOR USG POLITICAL SUPPORT AGAINST THE GUB: BANGKOK 13274). KRIANGSAK SAID THAT HIS PRIOR INFORMATION WAS THAT THE WESTERNERS WERE NOT AMERICAN, BUT THAT TIN OO HAD CONVINCED HIM OTHERWISE. HE SAID HE WAS NOW PREPARED TO CLARIFY THIS SITUATION WITH TIN OO AT THEIR NEXT MEETING.

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2. COMMENT. THE RUMOR OF AMERICAN PRESENCE AT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR LO HSING-HAN'S CAPTURE FIRST CROPPED UP AT A MEETING BETWEEN AMBASSADOR UNGER AND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN AUGUST 14. SINCE THE BURMESE MAY TEND TO BELIEVE A FELLOW SOUTHEAST

ASIAN BEFORE THEY BELIEVE US, IT SHOULD BE HELPFUL FOR KRIANGSAK
TO CORRECT THE RECORD DURING HIS NEXT MEETING. WE LEAVE TO
EMBASSY RANGOON'S DISCRETION WHETHER THE EMBASSY SHOULD ALSO
WEIGH IN TO CLARIFY THIS PERSISTENT REPORT.
MASTERS

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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